



# Building Assets Reducing Risks (BARR)

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Implementation Update 2025/2026

# AUSTIN PUBLIC SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN

## OUR MISSION

*(Our Core Purpose)*

Inspire. Empower. Accelerate.

## OUR VISION

*(What We Intend to Create)*

Preparing all learners to make a difference in the world.

## Our Core Values

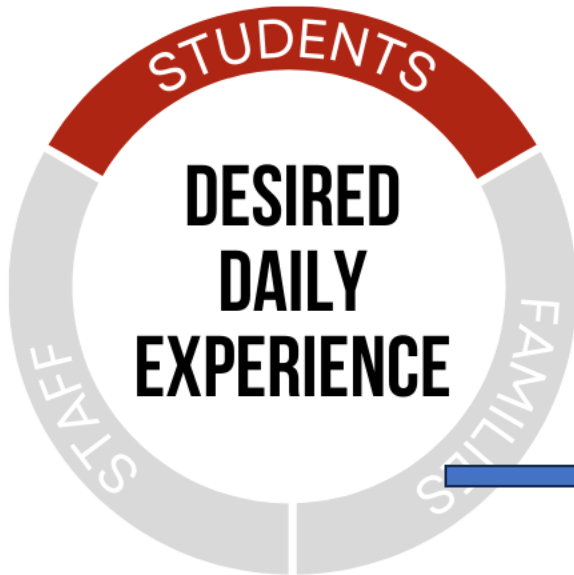
*(Drivers of Our Words and Actions)*

- Responsible: Demonstrates accountability to self and others
- Resilient: Develops perseverance and self-confidence
- Learner: Challenges self to think critically
- Communicator: Listens actively and shares learning and experiences
- Contributor: Engages as a productive member of the community and global society

## OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

*(Drivers of Our Continuous Improvement)*

1. Support and resources to ensure a safe and welcoming learning environment
2. Packer Profile for all learners
3. District-wide multi-tiered systems of support for all learners
4. Excellence in resource management



## STUDENTS

**I am supported and challenged in my learning and believe I will be successful**

- Teachers and all staff are approachable, listen and respond to my needs
- My teachers have time to talk through and help answer questions or help solve problems I have
- I am trusted to make good choices, be engaged in my learning, and held accountable but not overwhelmed

**I feel that school is safe and that school is challenging and fun**

- I am heard and respected for who I am by school staff and students
- The school and my interactions with students and staff are safe, positive and inclusive
- I enjoy coming to school every day and have time to be with friends during school
- I understand what is expected from me at school
- I am supported in my mental health needs

**I am an engaged learner at school and in our community**

- I have a voice and choice in how and what I learn
- My learning is hands-on, meaningful, challenging and helps me prepare for my future
- My teachers like me and believe in me
- I have teachers and staff that work with me in a way that benefits all students
- I am physically comfortable in the school setting
- This school should be about me not the teachers



## FAMILIES

**I am part of my child's education and feel welcomed, valued, and respected as a family**

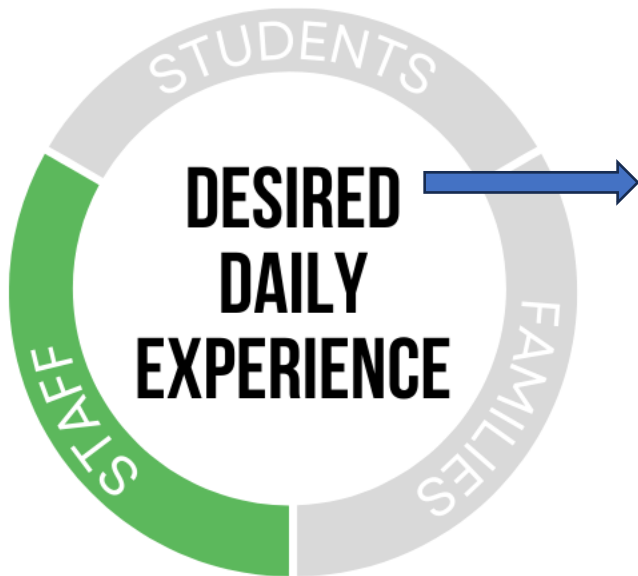
- My child is physically and emotionally safe at school
- My child feels a sense of belonging at school, is cared for, and valued
- My student can voice their thoughts and ideas without being discriminated against so they continue to learn

**My child enjoys coming to school and is safe, included and respected so they are learning every day**

- My child is challenged (not overwhelmed) in learning and development, listened to, and provided choice and voice in learning options
- Teachers know my child well and creates a fun, interactive approach to learning which is responsive to my child's and family needs

**I am engaged in a partnership with my child's school so I know what to do to help my child continue to grow and learn**

- I will feel welcome, informed and encouraged to collaborate with the teachers and staff at the school to help my child grow
- My child's teachers, my child and myself have open communication about their academic progress, social development and well-being
- District and school information is easy to understand and easily accessible
- My child is taught the life skills necessary to be successful in whatever path they choose after high school



## STAFF

### I am seen, valued, and respected for who I am and the work I do

- I work in a collaborative not competitive environment that honors the unique strengths of each individual
- I am seen as a professional and given the flexibility and support to provide students what they need to be successful
- I am listened to, heard and know that I matter
- I have a level of freedom and innovation within reasonable parameters

### I receive the support and resources to do my job well so I am able to create a healthy and safe learning environment

- I am a valued member of a caring, engaged, and collaborative team
- I receive constructive feedback in regards to my position so I can be the best version of myself
- I am treated with respect and fairness with reasonable expectations for work, performance, time, and employment
- I enjoy my job and have flexibility, satisfaction, and recognition

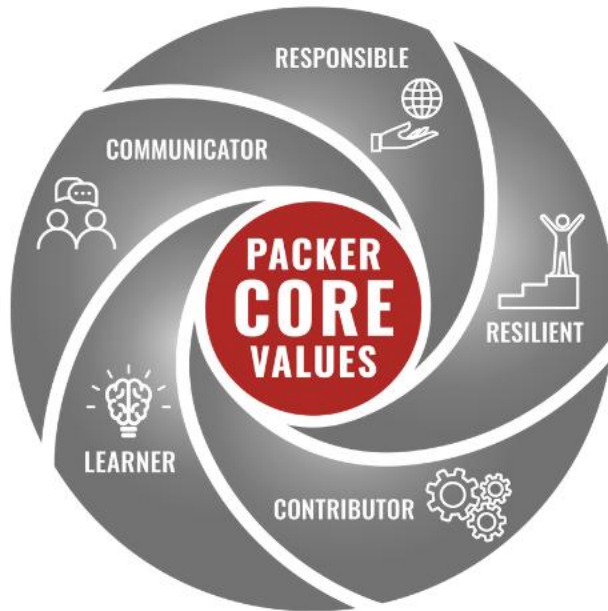
### I work in a district that is willing to adapt and change when necessary to best meet the needs of all students

- Diversity, equality, inclusion and equity for everyone
- I have the resources and materials I need in my classroom and for families so they know what they can do to support learning at home
- There is effective communication across the district and community so staff and families have the information they need
- I have adequate training for various aspects of my job



## WHAT OUGHT TO BE

The **Desired Daily Experience** sets the foundation of descriptions of the student, family, and staff experiences *if* the strategic plan is successfully implemented in APS.



## OUR CORE VALUES

*(Drivers of Our Words and Actions)*

- **Responsible:** Demonstrates accountability to self and others
- **Resilient:** Develops perseverance and self-confidence
- **Learner:** Challenges self to think critically
- **Communicator:** Listens actively and shares learning and experiences
- **Contributor:** Engages as a productive member of the community and global society



Same students. Same teachers. **Better results.**

# BARR: Building Assets, Reducing Risks

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# The BARR Model



**Focus on the whole student**



**Provide professional development for teachers, counselors and administrators**



**Use BARR's lessons to foster a climate for learning**




**Create cohorts of students**



**Hold regular meetings of the cohort teacher teams**



**Conduct Community Connect meetings**



**Partner with families in student learning**



**Engage administrators**

BARR cultivates belonging by implementing systems that ensure that every student is seen, feels valued, and has trusting, positive relationships within the building.

# BARR meeting structure

## **IJ Holton Intermediate School**

- Small Blocks meet for 40 minutes weekly – 8 teams
- Big Blocks meet for 30 minutes weekly – 2 teams
- Community Connect meets for 30 minutes weekly – 1 team

## **Ellis Middle School**

- Small Blocks meet for 45 minutes weekly – 6 teams
- Big Blocks meet for 30 minutes weekly – 4
- IST/Community Connect meets for 45 minutes weekly – 1 team

# BARR meetings



Same students. Same teachers. **Better results.**

## IJ Holton Intermediate School

As of 4/8/26, educators have discussed **66% (490)** of students using a strength-based, solution-focused approach.

## Ellis Middle School

As of 4/8/26, educators have discussed **60% (420)** of students using a strength-based, solution-focused approach.

In the 2024-25 school year, educators discussed **100%** of students using a strength-based, solution-focused approach.

# U-Time and I-Time Lessons

## IJ Holton Intermediate School

**U-Time** lessons happen every Thursday with Homeroom teacher. They take about 30 minutes. We will complete 30 lessons by the end of the year.

## Ellis Middle School

**I-Time** lessons happen every Wednesday during one of the core classes. This takes place on a rotating basis with 8 lessons taking place throughout the year in each core class for a total of 32 lessons.

## Topics

Building a Connected Community, Goals, Self-Discovery, Communication, Strengths/Assets, Grief & Loss/Stress Management, Bullying, Perspectives, Behaviors of Concern/Risk-Taking and Dreams

# Positive Postcards

## IJ Holton Intermediate School

As of 4/1/26, **60%** of students have received positive postcards from at least 1 teacher.



## Ellis Middle School

As of 4/1/26, **80%** of students have received positive postcards from at least 1 teacher.

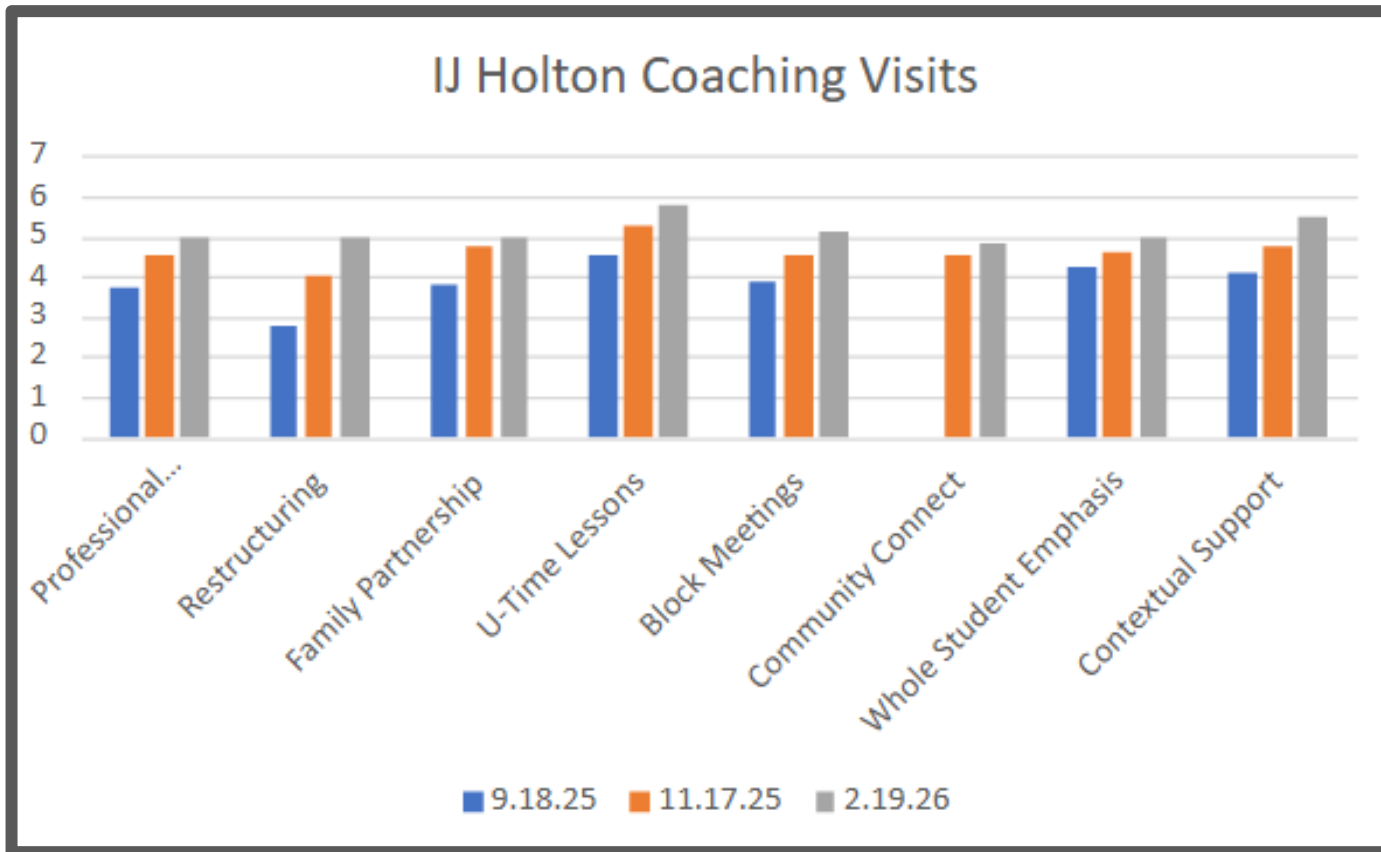
In the 2024-25 school year, **100%** of students received a positive postcard from at least 1 teacher.

**Postcard Total so far this year for IJ and Ellis**

**1008 postcards**

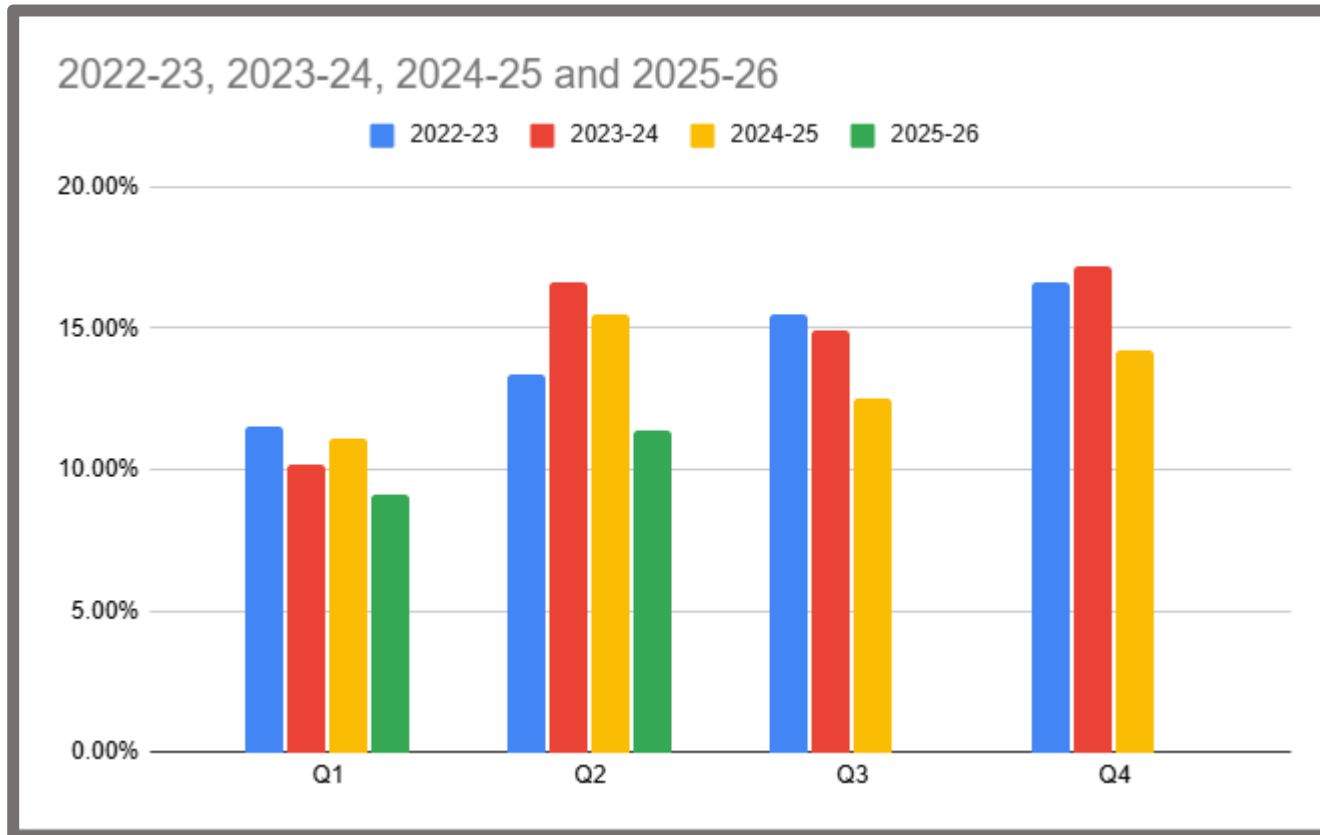
# IJ Holton Intermediate School

## Coaching Reports



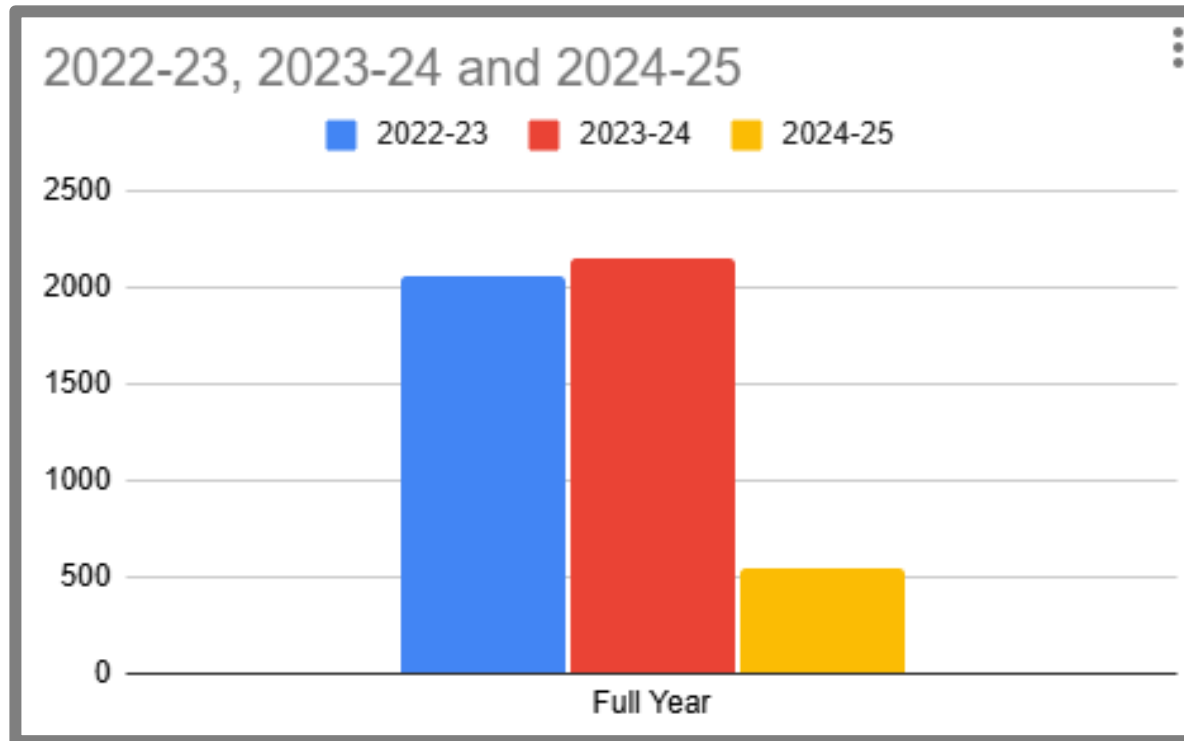
# Ellis Middle School

## Failure Rate Data



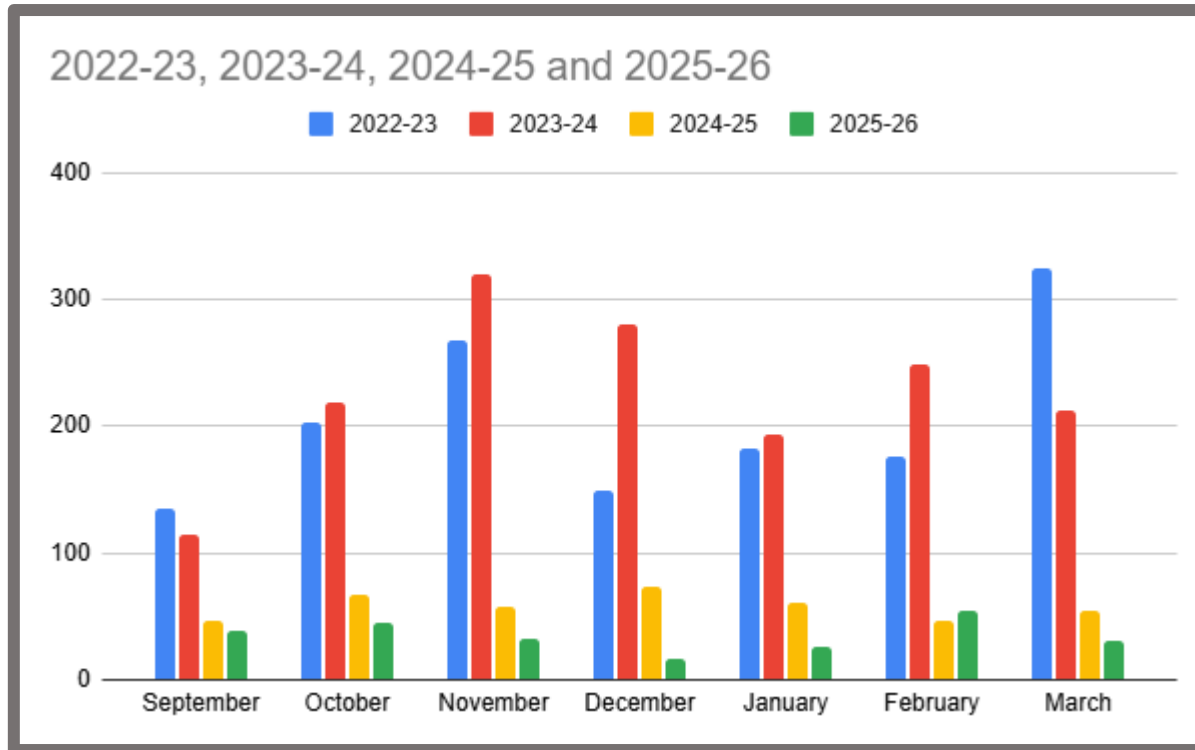
# Ellis Middle School

## Behavior Data by number of Major Referrals a Year



# Ellis Middle School

## Behavior Data by number of Major Referrals a Month



# Ellis Middle School

## BARR's Impact



Same students. Same teachers. **Better results.**

**Catch Days** - This quarterly group intervention for core classes was created to reduce the overall failure rate. Students who have all their work completed are rewarded & given time to participate in an enrichment activity while the rest of the students are given extra time and support by their teachers to complete their work.

**Academic Coaching** - This course was created based on data from a “Check in” model where a group of 17 students who had failed 2 or more courses the previous quarter received extra support for a quarter through weekly check-ins with an adult focused on grades, attendance, and building a positive relationship. The number of total failing grades for these students went from 53 to 24 (a 54.7% decrease) during this time.

# 2026 BARR National Conference



Same students. Same teachers. **Better results.**

## Attendees

- Kenra Ward, 5th grade teacher at IJ Holton
- Kristin Wilker, 5th grade teacher at IJ Holton
- Chelsea Brolsma, 6th grade teacher at IJ Holton
- Meghan Erickson, 7th grade teacher at Ellis
- Sara Twedten, 8th grade teacher at Ellis
- Lea Oelfke, 7th grade school counselor at Ellis
- Karen Dunbar, BARR Coordinator at IJ Holton & Ellis



## Poster - Ellis Middle School

## Presentation – IJ Holton Intermediate School & Ellis Middle School

## DEMOGRAPHICS

726 students in grades 7-8  
 39.3% White  
 28.9% Hispanic  
 14.6% Asian  
 9% Black  
 3.6 % Pacific Islander  
 1.1% American Indian  
 22.6% English Language Learners  
 20.8% Special Education Services  
 58.3% Free/Reduced Lunch

Years in BARR: 2 (2024-25, 2025-26)  
 Coordinator: Karen Dunbar  
 karen.dunbar@austin.k12.mn.us



## BARR'S IMPACT

**Catch Days** - This quarterly group intervention for core classes was created to reduce the overall failure rate. Students who have all their work completed are rewarded & given time to participate in an enrichment activity while the rest of the students are given extra time and support by their teachers to complete their work.

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## STRENGTHS

- In 2024-2025, 100% of our Students received at least 1 Positive Postcard.
- In 2024-25, we discussed 100% of our students using a strength-based, solution-focused approach.

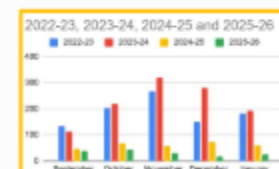


## DATA

### Failure Rate Data



### Behavior Data by Number of Referrals per Month



### Behavior Data by Number of Referrals in a Full Year



# **U-Times and I-Times: Key to collecting qualitative data while focusing on the whole student**

**Ellis Middle School  
Austin, Minnesota**



# The BARR Model



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# Accelerating BARR at AHS

Year 1 & 2

AHS	ALC
Year 1 (2023-2024): 1 Section of BARR in the 9 <sup>th</sup> grade	Year 1 (2023-2024):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 Section of BARR in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade</li><li>• 4 teachers on BARR Team</li><li>• Approx 90 students served</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focused on 9<sup>th</sup> grade cohort only</li><li>• 2 teachers on the BARR team</li></ul>
Year 2 (2024-2025):	Year 2 (2024-2025):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Majority of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade</li><li>• 2 BARR Teams</li><li>• 6 teachers on each team</li><li>• Approx 320 students teamed</li><li>• Infused Packer Profile Seminar course into BARR model</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• BARR model for all ALC students (9-11)</li><li>• 3-4 teachers on a team</li><li>• Infused Packer Profile Seminar into BARR model</li></ul>

# Accelerating BARR at AHS

Year 3- We move slow to  
ensure success!

AHS	ALC/AOA
Year 3: (2025-2026)	Year 3: (2025-2026)
<u>Grade 9 Teams</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Majority of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade students teamed</li> <li>2 BARR Teams</li> <li>5/6 teachers on each team</li> <li>Infused Packer Profile Seminar course into BARR model</li> </ul>	<u>ALC</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BARR model for all ALC students (9-12)</li> <li>4 teachers on a team</li> <li>I-Times for 9<sup>th</sup> graders</li> <li>Infused Packer Profile Seminar course into BARR model</li> </ul>
<u>Grade 10 Team</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BARR model (except I-Times) for one section of approx. 70 students</li> <li>4 Teachers on team</li> </ul>	<u>AOA</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BARR model (except I-Times) for all full-time AOA students</li> <li>4-5 teachers on a team</li> </ul>
<u>EL BARR Team</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BARR model (except I-Times) for one section of approx. 60 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders.</li> <li>6 Teachers on team</li> </ul>	

# Key Insights

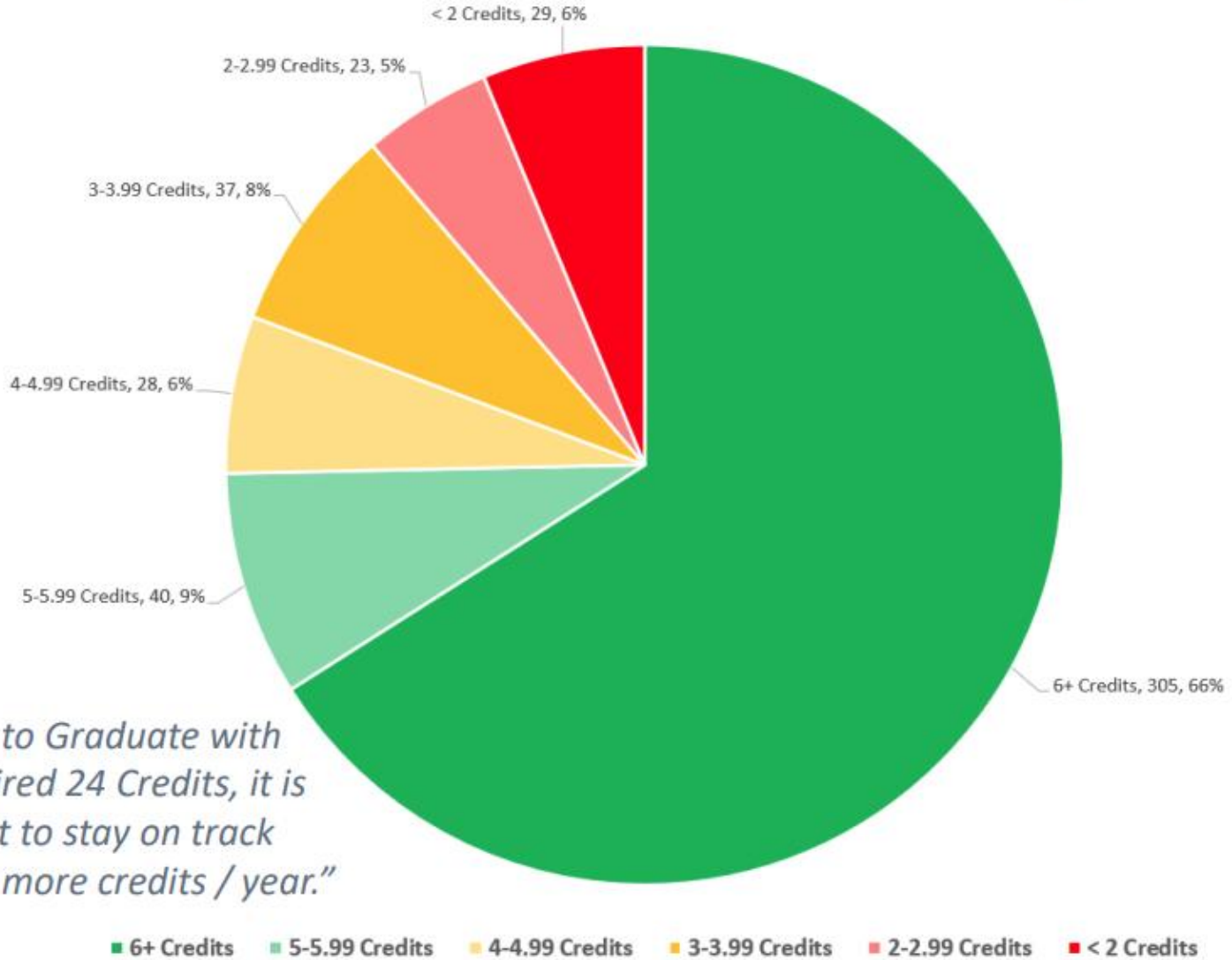


- Failure Rates among Grade 09 students at AHS have dropped 5.3% over the last 3 years, going from no BARR, to BARR pilot, to full grade-level BARR implementation.
- The 24-25 Gr.09 cohort has a significantly better failure rate from their Gr.08 school year. Semester 1 failure rate in Gr.08 was at 21.2% and dropped 11.4% to 9.8% in Gr.09. Semester 2 failure rate in Gr.08 was at 22.6% and dropped 11.1% to 11.5% in Gr.09.
- Over the last 3 years – Gr.09 credit attainment has improved from 66% earning 6+ credits to 81% an increase of 15%. This should have future positive impact on the NGA calculated Graduation Rate for Austin High school

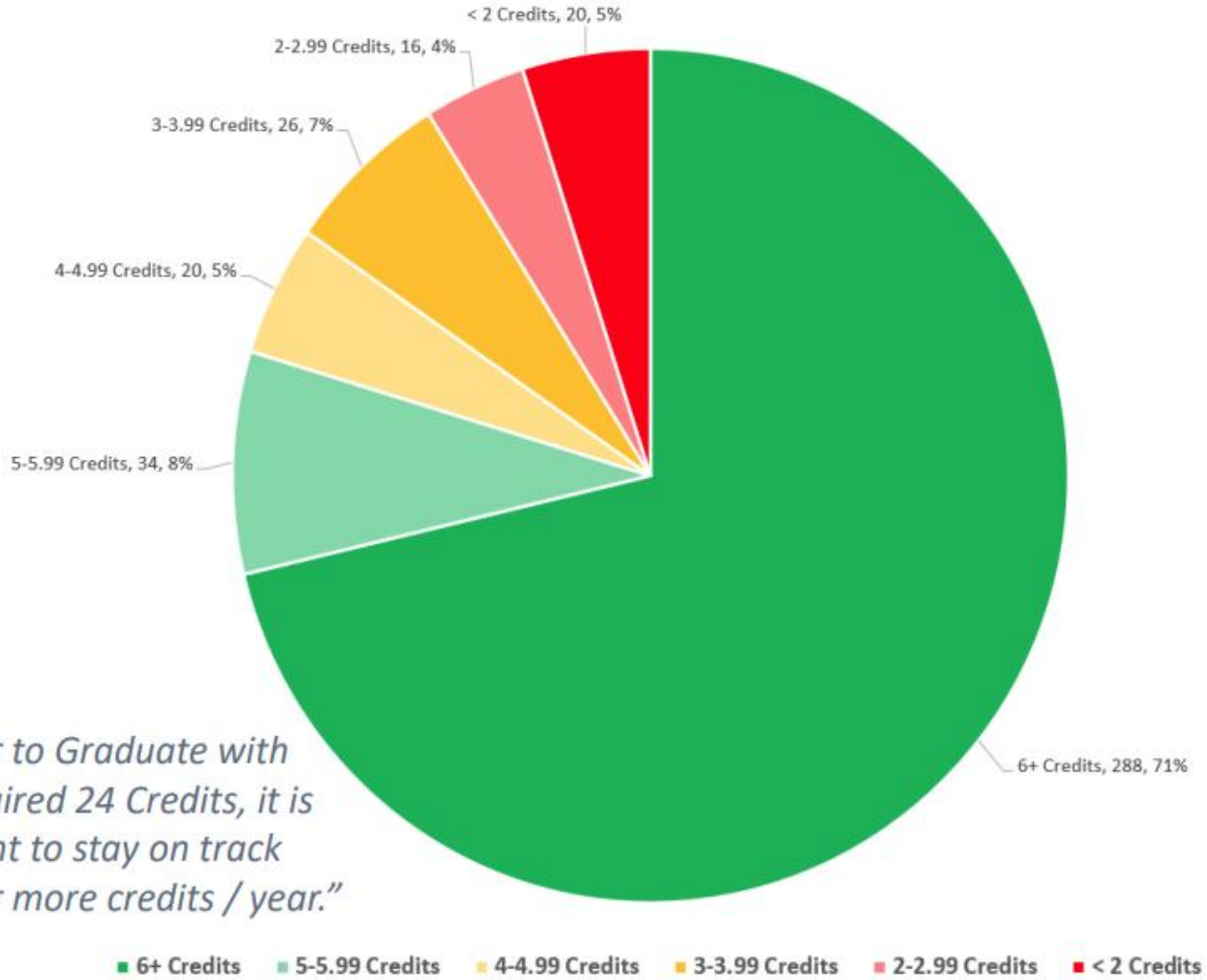
# Key Insights

- The 24-25 Gr.09 cohort exhibited a 69.1% decrease from Gr.08 to Gr.09 in total behavior referrals for Semester 1. During Semester 2, the 24-25 Gr.09 cohort exhibited a 61.8% decrease from Gr.08 to Gr.09 in total behavior referrals.
- Overall attendance rates appears to be less impacted by BARR implementation, but attendance has significant impact on academic performance. Grade 09 students in school  $\geq 90\%$  of the time have an average GPA of 3.102 compared to their peers in school  $< 70\%$  of the time who only have an average GPA of 0.881.

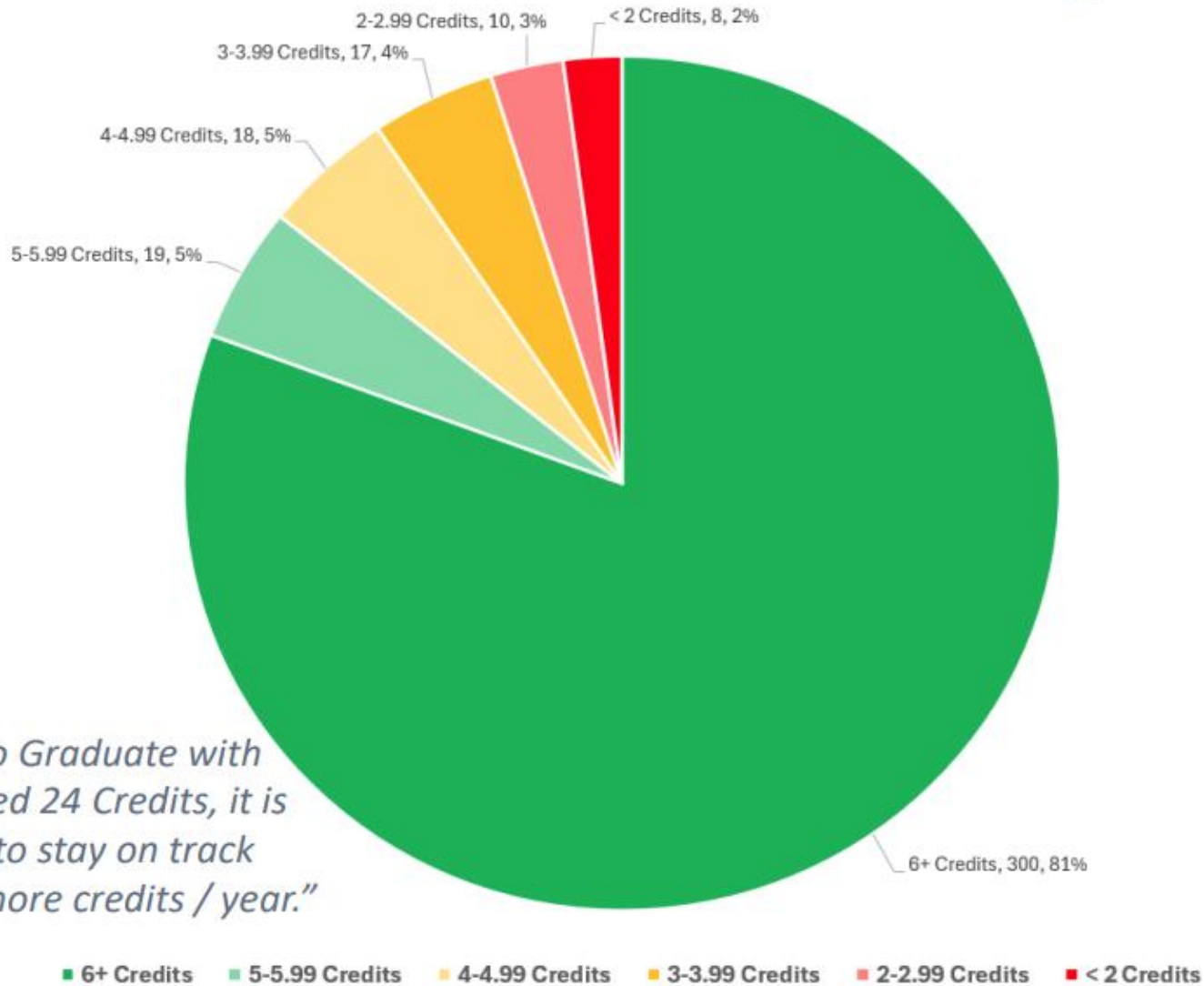




*“In order to Graduate with APS required 24 Credits, it is important to stay on track with 6 or more credits / year.”*



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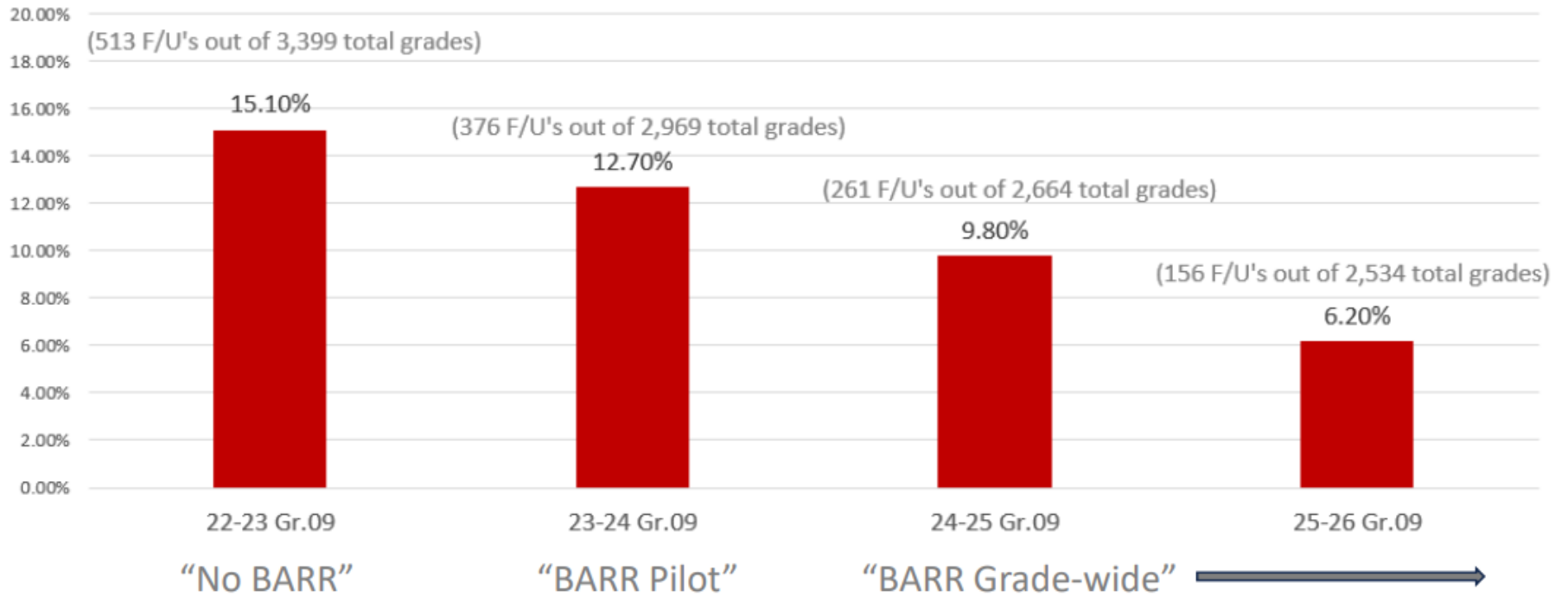
**Austin High School (0492-01-200)**  
**Grade 09 S1 Semester Grade Summary**

	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F	P	S+	S	S-	U	I	Grand Total
22-23 Gr.09	636	221	191	295	201	173	227	135	130	147	144	477	358	1	20	7	36		3399
23-24 Gr.09	687	203	169	239	158	138	157	122	99	126	137	340	331	7	16	4	36		2969
24-25 Gr.09	739	251	171	238	174	130	160	143	104	130	112	226		3	36	12	35		2664
25-26 Gr.09	835	282	205	231	142	108	167	105	77	116	96	148			6	8	8		2534

Failure Rate
15.1%
12.7%
9.8%
6.2%

Source: Infinite Campus Grades Extract (School=200, Term=S1, Score ≠ "N", "W", or "null")

Grade 09 S1 Semester Grade 4-Yr Failure Rate Trend



# BARR Coach's feedback:

The Community Connect/IST team had grown expeditiously over the past year. The team is focused, documents student reviews, and supports each other.

The AOA Big Block has strong knowledge of their students, supports each other, uses qualitative and quantitative data to support each review and maintains fair expectations for their student cohort. In this most recent meeting, the team did a fantastic job of assessing true root causes and planning home contacts. The Small Block meetings demonstrated staff knowing student progress, honoring strengths, and applying interventions with a “case management” level of support.

All teams are consistently supported by the AOA/ALC administrator who is an essential member. Her membership is crucial because she is a true think partner, knows every student, realistic, and dynamic communicator that connects to staff, students, and families.

The AHS principal and BARR Coordinator are synchronized about program goals and meet consistently.

The I-Times lessons observed, Decision Making, created moments for student-to-student relationships, and had an appealing exit ticket. During the lessons, one teacher had a great slide about the student brain and created scenarios that were impactful to their students.

During this visit, the Packer and Scarlet Big Block teams were observed. Both teams acknowledged student strengths and connection to school. In the most recent meetings, teams re-evaluated students, crafted/ revised SMART goals and maintained fair expectations for their most struggling students

# Additional Shoutouts



Starting fourth quarter, over 826 positive postcards have been sent home from AHS/AOA/ALC teams!!!! 5 out of 6 teams have already sent postcards to all their students on team.



Over 386 students have been discussed in teams since the start of fourth quarter.

# Moving forward with BARR

- This year completes our 3 year implementation contract with BARR.
- Refine our EL BARR team.
- Student and parent questionnaires at the beginning of the year to increase parent engagement and to gather more information on our students.
- Continue to refine Community Connect/IST meeting (Tier 3 meeting).
- Continue fidelity checks by regularly using BARR rubrics for I-Times and block meetings.